

Message Text

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY ACCRA

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FOLLOWING TELEGRAM FROM LONDON DATED JANUARY 18, 1977
SENT SECSTATE WASHDC INFO BONN, BRUSSELS, COPENHAGEN,
DUBLIN, THE HAGUE, LUXEMBOURG, PARIS, ROME, EC BRUSSELS,
NATO, OECD PARIS, BELFAST, EDINBURGH, JOHANNESBURG,
PRETORIA, CAPE TOWN IS REPEATED TO YOU: QUOTE

UNCLAS LONDON 00898

CAPETOWNFOR EMBASSY

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: ELAB, SHUM, UK

SUBJECT: BRITISH ANTI-APARTHEID BOYCOTT FLOUNDERS BUT
INJUNCTION STIMULATES POLITICAL DEBATE

REF: LONDON 0831

1. A REPORT TODAY (JANUARY 18) FROM THE TIMES BRUSSELS
CORRESPONDENT DAVID CROSS INDICATES THAT -- IN THE ICFTU
VIEW -- THE ANTI-APARTHEID BOYCOTT IS GOING WELL AND THAT
IN PARTICULAR "THE MOST ACTIVE ON THE INDUSTRIAL FRONT
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APPEAR TO BE BRITISH AND FRENCH UNIONS." HOWEVER, IN
FACT BRITISH TRADE UNION EFFORTS HAVE HAD LITTLE PRACTI-
CAL EFFECT THUS FAR, ESPECIALLY SINCE THE INJUNCTION WAS
GRANTED BY THE APPEAL COURT (REFTEL) TO PREVENT THE POST-
AL WORKERS FROM STOPPING COMMUNICATIONS WITH SOUTH
AFRICA. IN THE MEANTIME, AS THE APPEAL COURT CONSIDERS
WHETHER TO CONTINUE THE INJUNCTION, ATTORNEY GENERAL

SAMUEL SILKIN. WHO APPEARED AT ITS HEARINGS TODAY, STRONGLY CRITICIZED THE COURT FOR GRANTING THE INJUNCTION ON SATURDAY.

2. WHATEVER THE OUTCOME OF TODAY'S HEARINGS, THE INJUNCTION HAS LARGELY DESTROYED ANY IMPACT THE POSTAL WORKERS' ACTIONS MIGHT HAVE HAD ON OVERALL BOYCOTT EFFORTS. EVEN IF THE COURT LIFTS THE INJUNCTION, THE UNION OF POST OFFICE WORKERS CANNOT REIMPOSE ITS BAN BEFORE THURSDAY, BY WHICH TIME THE SHOW WILL BE ABOUT OVER. (THE BOYCOTT WAS TO HAVE RUN FOR A WEEK.) SOME POSTAL WORKERS' LOCAL BRANCHES HAVE ALSO CRITICIZED THE NATIONAL UNION FOR TAKING THE ORIGINAL INITIATIVE TO STOP COMMUNICATIONS WITH SOUTH AFRICA WITHOUT CONSULTING THEM. MOREOVER, TRAVEL BY SEA AND AIR. INCLUDING SHIP AND PLANE LOADINGS, CONTINUES WITHOUT INCIDENT.

3. ATTENTION IN BRITAIN IS NOW FOCUSED ON THE POLITICAL AND CONSTITUTIONAL IMPLICATIONS OF THE INJUNCTION AND THE ATTORNEY GENERAL'S FAILURE TO AUTHORIZE A LOWER COURT ACTION AGAINST IT. DURING HIS APPEARANCE BEFORE THE APPEAL COURT TODAY, SILKIN TOLD THE THREE JUDGES: "I AM ANSWERABLE TO PARLIAMENT AND NOT TO YOU". AS EXPECTED, LABOR AND CONSERVATIVE MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT HAVE ENTERED THE FRAY, WITH LABOR MPS PREPARING TO ATTACK WHAT THEY TERM THE RIGHT-WING POLITICAL BIAS OF THE JUDICIARY, AND THE CONSERVATIVES, WHO HAD EARLIER QUESTIONED THE LEGALITY OF THE POSTAL BOYCOTT, SUPPORTING "THE RULE OF LAW" DEMONSTRATED IN THE APPEAL COURT'S ACTION. (IF THE UNCLASSIFIED

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INJUNCTION IS CONTINUED BY THE APPEAL COURT, THE CASE IS EXPECTED TO GO TO THE HOUSE OF LORDS.)

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